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Thursday Press Conference Transcript

PART ONE: DRIVERS – Sebastian VETTEL (Ferrari), Fernando ALONSO (McLaren), Nico HULKENBERG (Renault)

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Gentlemen, if we could by getting your thoughts on the Halo cockpit protection that is going to be introduced from the start of 2018. Sebastian, if we could begin with you, what are your thoughts about the Halo and how do you feel it compares to the Shield you tested at Silverstone two weeks ago?

Sebastian VETTEL: Well, I wasn't a big fan of the Shield, mostly for the reason that it was impacting visibility. The Halo test I did, I think it was last year in Abu Dhabi, and for sure you need to get used to it but at least it didn't impact on the vision, so I think that was the biggest difference. Obviously there has been a lot of talk, as I got it, but I think overall you need to understand that it is a decision that helps us in the car in case something goes very wrong. For sure, if you look at Formula One, the way Formula One cars look and so on, I can understand if people say it doesn't belong on a Formula One car but on the other hand I think times are changing, you are moving forward and I think if you put it very clear, then it also should be very clear for everyone and there shouldn't be a doubt in your mind whether to introduce it or not. I think if you offer the system as it stands, with the power that it has to give us additional protection, offer that to Justin Wilson some time ago, I think he would take it and we would all be happy to take it to save his life. Now we can't turn back the clock but I think knowing that something is there that helps us in scenarios it would be ignorant and stupid to ignore. Regarding the looks: as I said, I like Formula One cars of the past and so on, but there are also elements that I like nowadays. I mean, racing cars with wings that Formula One cars didn't have until I think late-'60s or [early] '70s, so now that's part of it. There are plenty of other examples – we had V12 engines, which I would like to go back to, and we don't have anymore. But overall, it's supposed to help us and I think that's what we need to remember.

Q: Fernando, you're the most experienced driver in the room with 280 starts to your name, what are your thoughts on the Halo?

Fernando ALONSO: I tend to agree with everything Sebastian said. First is the safety and if this device can help in many of the fatal accidents that we had in the last 10 or 15 years, as has been proved by the FIA, I think we are all happy to implement the device and we are all happy to have some of our colleagues, if we could go back in time and save their lives we would be all happy. That's the first and only thing we should talk about. Then, the aesthetics: I don't care too much to be honest. Formula One has changed a lot. Even from my first year, in 2001, until now, the cars look very different. The height of the front nose,

the height of the cockpit [surround] to protect the helmet area, you know. Forty or 50 years ago they didn't have seatbelts in a Formula One and when seatbelts were implemented there was not any debate. If they had to fit it in Formula One... it's fun to drive with no seatbelt... it should be like that. For me there is no question, I'm happy to implement any extra head protection for next year. If the FIA studied and developed the Halo and this is the most effective way to protect the head of the drivers it's more than welcome in my opinion.

Q: Nico, you've expressed your reservations about Halo in the past. Now it's here, what's your reaction?

Nico HULKENBERG: I'm still going to race. I won't retire for sure. But yeah, I was never a big supporter of Halo or of additional head protection. I'm still not but it's not my decision, it's the FIA making the safety rules and requirements. So it is what it is, I will accept it and get on with it.

Q: Can you elaborate on why you're not a fan?

NH: I think there is that element of if they fix the looks; it doesn't look pretty for sure. It will protect against something, the freak accident, accidents that's one out of a million. We have security and the protection of the cars gets better, these tethers that keep the tyres get better and better every year and give even less chance of a tyre or heavy things flying round, so I'm not sure that this additional protection is necessary because all the other areas keep improving and we've compromised the looks quite a lot.

Q: Marcus, your thoughts on the implementation of Halo?

Marcus ERICSSON: I think it's positive. I think like Fernando and Sebastian said safety should be prioritized. I think the FIA has done a good job to really look into it and if this is a best solution at the moment I think it's a no-brainer to go for it for next year. If it can save someone in the future, it's great. Also, I tested it last year and when I drove with it I didn't really notice it all, so I think it's a good thing that it's not going to change anything when you drive, that you have the same feeling when you drive. Yeah, it maybe doesn't look the prettiest but I think it's also something we will get used to. It's always when there are big changes in Formula One it doesn't look so pretty at first, but then people get used and I think it will be the same thing with the Halo.

Q: Sebastian, this is your 50th start for Ferrari, a milestone reached by only 13 other drivers. How do you reflect on your two-and-a-half years with the team and what does the future hold?

SV: I think time is moving quickly. Obviously, I have been very busy. I think the whole team has been very, very busy trying to get back. I think this year has been very, very good for most of the year so far. Overall, very positive. I'm really enjoying it. I think it's great to be part of the Ferrari family and as I said we are all focused and determined to get Ferrari back to where it belongs, so that's our mission let's say, our target, our goal and yeah, that's what we're working on.

Q: And beyond the end of the year?

SV: Well, it's true that I haven't got a contract yet but I think the primary objective at the moment is not to look at papers and worry about those, I think it's to make sure that we get some good results. Obviously we have another race and another opportunity here before the summer break and then there is a bit more time.

Q: Fernando, does the layout of the Hungaroring present you and McLaren with your best opportunity so far?

FA: Yeah I think so. I think Monaco was also a great track, in terms of the characteristics of it. I was not there, so this is really the first time that I had this possibility of hopefully feeling competitive and feeling the possibility to be there in Q3 and then in the points, if something happens in front of us maybe to get even a better result than this, maybe seventh or eighth, that is the maximum you can fight for at the moment. So definitely an important weekend for us. We paid some penalties in the last two races to arrive here with some more freedom of engine choices and something more in the pocket, so hopefully it pays off this weekend.

Q: Nico, a tremendous weekend for you and the team at Silverstone. Can the pace there translate to this race track?

NH: Yeah, I think this weekend I feel it's a bit more of a true teller. For sure, I think at Silverstone, with the upgrades we brought, it was definitely a good step forward but I think Hungary here, these track characteristics, will be a true teller for us of where we stand. Interesting days ahead. I'm also excited to see how the car feels, the way we pan out. We have some additional upgrades again this weekend. The team has got some good momentum, pushing quite hard and bringing new bits to every race, so it all feels very positive, so we've got to keep working in that direction.

Q: Marcus, could we just get your reaction to the news that Fred Vasseur is the new team principal at Sauber?

ME: I think it's good news. I think Fred is a very respectable (sic) person in the paddock and he has done a lot of great things in motorsport in general. I don't know him that well yet, but I went straightaway after Silverstone down to Hinwil to sit down with him and, yeah, I got a really good feeling talking to him and he had some really good ideas on how to structure the team for the future, both short- and long-term. Obviously, this is the first weekend he's working on track with the team, but I think all in all it's good news for the team. There are a lot of good things happening. Also we have some updates on the car this weekend as well, so exciting times for Sauber.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Flavio Vanetti – Corriere della Sera) Sebastian, it's said that this is a very tough race for Ferrari, because you need to react from Silverstone otherwise Mercedes could get a bigger advantage. Do you agree or not? Do you still believe that the season is long and that you have chances in the future?

SV: I think I had a lot of tough races in my past already. I think it's normal that there is always talk about this race or the next race coming up based on the race you had. I'm not stressing too much. I think on paper this should be a good race for us. Let's see how we get going. Certainly, looking back, Silverstone wasn't a great weekend for us. At the same time I think things were going quite good for Mercedes, so I think it has been the other way round as well this year. I'm not stressing too much. I like the track, I'm just going to enjoy. Everyone here, we know what we have to do and that's what we plan to do, so the fact that it's the last race before the summer break or the race after Silverstone, that maybe wasn't good for us, doesn't change anything. You can score as many points here as anywhere else. But, as I said, it's a nice race, so I think we need to make sure we enjoy.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – GloboEsporte) Sebastian, after the Monaco Grand Prix you had a 25-point advantage over Lewis and also Ferrari was first in the Constructors' Championship. Four races later Ferrari is behind and you have just one point in the difference. It looks like Mercedes did a better a job in developing the car. Fernando, in the case of the accident you had in Australia, the Halo, what would be the influence of it?

SV: I can't disagree with what you said because it's based on the points that we have today but I think you need to look at the races. Obviously, you know, we didn't get the best races in the last couple. Saying that I think we were very close to winning in Austria. I don't think we were lacking any speed there and that's only two races ago. Now, as I said, Silverstone for sure was not the best race for us, but sometimes shit hits the fan and then it's not so pleasant. In many ways it was not such a good weekend for us. Obviously the last two laps didn't help, but these things happen. Sometimes you suffer a puncture. It will not be the last one, unfortunately, in my life, and it has happened to all of us. You have a lot of races, some will be better, some will be worse. Now, the last couple were maybe not fantastic but I'm very positive. We come here and we know the car is strong, we know we have a chance to fight for victory and that's good news, so I think we should look at the positives rather than looking at one race where maybe things didn't go well for us and it turned out to go well for them. I think if you look at the week after Monaco, we were quite happy, maybe Mercedes wasn't. In the end., you shouldn't get distracted from short-term results. Rest assured, we were not happy with the result in Silverstone. There were some weaknesses. It was a very good weekend for us in terms of what we learned about the car to go forwards and in fact I think we have some bits here that should help us and the plan is to keep pushing. So, as I said, the determination, the commitment is very high to make sure we stay at the front.

FA: I think nothing really will affect the exit from the cockpit, as I understood from the FIA studies, so that will be the same for me. Definitely, while you are in the air, my only worry there was if something could impact with my helmet. If I had the Halo there I would probably be a little bit less afraid of any injury, so happy to... not to repeat it, but happy to wear it.

Q: (Roksana Cwik – SwiatWyscigow) Sebastian, after the Silverstone tyre failures, what has been done at Ferrari to ensure it won't happen again?

SV: Obviously we looked into it with care. It impacted on my race, on Kimi's race, and obviously we are trying to find the reasons for it, together with Pirelli, to find and understand. In my case it was a slow puncture that started already some corners before. Unfortunately, if you want to say, a little bit too late, so we couldn't react and get into the pits straight away. We spent a lot of time on the tyre. Obviously it wasn't fresh anymore. I could feel the degradation. At the time we thought it was fine. It's one of those things that with hindsight it could have been easy for us to get a new set and to come back. But at the time you have the track position, you don't know other people are doing, you don't know how much they are struggling with their tyres at the end of the race and so on. I think we took a lot of action trying to understand first of all what happened and then a lot of action trying to understand what we could have done better and what we will change in the future when we are in a similar position.

Q: (Silvia Arias – Parabrisas) Question for Fernando. In Silverstone you had dinner with McLaren people and after this dinner they said we are really lucky, we have hopes that Fernando will stay next year. What do you have to say about that?

FA: Nothing really. I mean, we had dinner there, we have some grands prix that the whole McLaren people are there, so we had some conversations for the future as well but nothing really changed. My opinion or my wishes for next year which remains the same.

Q: (Péter Vámosi – Vas Népe) Question to all Monaco winners and Le Mans winner. First of all what do you think of Porsche's exit from World Endurance Racing and Championship and what do you think, can you make the triple crown now, like Graham Hill in the past or is this possibility gone now?

Let's start with Nico.

NH: Yeah, obviously a pity in a way to see Porsche leave the WEC Championship. I guess they came back, they were there now four years, won it three times in a row so I guess you could say mission accomplished. They're probably looking for a new challenge now. It was only down to two manufacturers, so probably need something new, something more challenging. Definitely a bit of a shock to the system there.

Fernando, the triple crown?

FA: I think it's still there. It's not that you cannot win Le Mans with another manufacturer, y'know? Arguably now Toyota will be very favourite next year. And then the Indy500 it doesn't affect. Porsche was not there. So did they confirm today they stop the programme? I didn't know.

Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto Motor) Sebastian, you said that you have made your analysis about what happened with the tyre in Silverstone – but what was the conclusion? Could you have done anything to avoid them or was it just a freak incident that both of the cars had either a puncture or delamination and you could have done nothing about it.

SV: Excuse me for being sarcastic, we could have pitted. So then... for sure it doesn't happen. Yeah, as I said, there's plenty of things that we learnt. We'll probably take action next time and try to avoid. As I said, from my point of view, I got the explanation and then you move on, you can't go back and change it. I obviously was inside the car, we talked about the tyres before it happened and, as I said, they didn't feel fresh, I reported – but I was also sure they would make it. Then, two laps, you could argue, two laps more, two laps less, so with hindsight now it's easy but it has happened. It has impacted our race. We can't change that, what we can change is next time we face maybe a similar situation.

Q: (Kate Walker – Motorsport . com) Question for Sebastian. I know you opened the conference by talking positively about the Halo from your own personal opinion. I believe that last year you, as a GPDA director, along with the other directors, wrote to the FIA talking about having canvassed the other drivers, both current and reserve and found widespread support. Have you spoken to your fellow drivers now that the Halo has been implemented? Are you finding the same level of support? What's the GPDA stance, rather than your personal one, please?

SV: Well, our GPDA stance is very simple. Obviously the GPDA is there to support and try to look from a drivers' voice into things that can be improved in terms of safety. That's our main interest and has been in the past. So, I think it's very clear. More or less one year ago we got a presentation here. Shortly after, or right after the drivers' briefing about the Halo, about its consequences, about the outcome in various accidents, whether it was better, worse or neutral, and the result was very clear, it was better to neutral depending on the accident obviously. So, right after that, as far as I remember – it's a year ago – we sent a letter that we appreciate the fact that FIA is continuously trying to push and trying to find new solutions to give us more support on track to help push safety. We asked them, as much as we can, to keep doing exactly that. So, look further into it and so on. As I understand, I think it was agreed about a year ago anyways, that we will have addition head protection for '18. Now it has been just confirmed. Bit surprised to see the surprise about the decision but, as I said, not just from my personal point of view, I think the majority of the drivers appreciate the fact that we go forward now. As I said for aesthetics, it's always difficult to please everybody opinion but I think the Halo system that we saw last year will probably not be the one that we see next year and the year after and the year after. It's one of those things that maybe they start off not so good looking and then they're actually not so bad.

Q: (Jerome Pugmire – AP) Question for Nico and for Fernando. I'd like to know your thoughts on Formula E as a sport. Mercedes have decided to go there next year and

you two have raced in other categories. Wanted to know your thoughts on that sport.

FA: I don't have a strong opinion because I never saw the real car, I never had too much interest on the details. Difficult to have an opinion of that – but I respect a lot other series out there, apart from Formula One. They race in the best cities in the world and they are promoting this Formula E in a very good way. So, y'know, as I said, I respect the series and maybe one day I get more interested but now I don't have a strong opinion. It's clear it's attractive for some of the big manufacturers and things like that, as Mercedes show with the announcement. So, y'know, they're doing a good job.

Nico?

NH: Yeah, for sure, the fact is it's growing. More and more manufacturers are getting involved, obviously many car manufacturers are going more the hybrid and electric car route, so there's good support for the series. Personally, I've never been to a race or seen the car or driven or anything so also can't comment too much about it but think the setup as such is working. Will be interesting to see where it goes in the next couple of years.

Q: (Jon McEvoy – Daily Mail) To Sebastian, what is it that's delaying you about signing the new Ferrari deal and when do you expect there will be news on who you're going to sign for? Re-signing or moving somewhere else.

SV: As far delaying, I think the fact we are working hard, both from the team's point, my point, I think we have other things to do right now, so, as I said, in the summer there's a bit more time. There's a couple of weeks' stretch where there is no race but for now I think the focus is extremely high on working on the car. So, for me I'm obviously not designing the bits but trying to give as much feedback as I can, trying to spend time in the simulator, generally talking to the team. That, at the moment, has priority. As I said, a piece of paper can be signed fairly quickly so that's not a problem.

Q: (Rebecca Clancy – The Times) To follow up on that, Sebastian, Ferrari have said they're ready to renew your contract whenever you are. Do you want to stay with the team?

SV: I don't see why not. I think... I'm certainly not ready this weekend, and last weekend, so, as I said, I'm not in a rush, I don't think the team is in a rush, as far as I understood, I think I have a good contact to the team, I think they would tell me otherwise so, as I said, there's no problem, nothing wrong.

Q: (István Simon – Automagazin) My question is to Nico Hülkenberg. After the grand prix we are going to have a two-day FIA Formula One test here at the Hungaroring and one of the big names, in fact the biggest name to participate in the test is Robert Kubica who will be testing a Renault car, 2017 car. What are your feelings towards him as a possible team-mate to you for next year or even this year? Are you going to follow his process closely? Have you been asked by the team to give any advice to him how to drive this car?

NH: Firstly I think it's a great comeback for him personally after the accident and the difficulties he has been through to have this opportunity and chance to test the current Formula One car. We all knew that he was one of the really good drivers before his accident and could have had a really great career. So, yeah, for sure I will follow. I won't be here but for sure I want to know how he's getting on. It will be very interesting to see how it works. Team-mate question, to be honest I'm really relaxed about who is the team-mate. Team-mates, you always have a team-mate. You work with him, you get on with him, obviously it's a competitive relationship but it doesn't matter really who it for me. So, I'll sit back and wait and see.

PART TWO: DRIVERS – Max VERSTAPPEN (Red Bull), Sergio PÉREZ (Force India), Stoffel VANDOOORNE (McLaren), Kevin MAGNUSSEN (Haas)

Q: Session one we had a lot of talk about the implementation of the Halo cockpit head protection in 2018. I'd just like to get each of your thoughts on that. Perhaps we could start with Max.

Max VERSTAPPEN: OK, yeah, I don't like it but of course at the end of the day you have to respect the decision of the FIA. I think since we introduced the Virtual Safety Car, that reduced a lot of risk when you are speeding under the yellow flag in the race and then also with the wheel tethers, they are quite strong at the moment so I don't think you will lose a wheel very easily, and when there are parts flying around from the car, it's not really going to protect you. So, I don't really understand why we should need it.

Sergio?

Sergio PÉREZ: I'm in favour of it. Whatever has to do with safety, safety always comes first. I think if we had the Halo by now, the last six, seven years it will have saved at least a life. That's worth the risk that the FIA is taking with that. I think once we implement Halo the teams will improve. I think Halo needs a lot of work by now – but I'm sure the system will be improved a lot. We have very clever engineers in Formula One and now that all the teams know that it has to be in place for next year, I believe they will improve it a lot.

Kevin, your thoughts?

Kevin MAGNUSSEN: I'm also against it. I don't think it's what Formula One is about. I think there should be a limit or, at least, a more clever way to improve the safety. I don't think the Halo is the right way. In general, I don't agree that safety always is number one. I think there is a limit where it becomes too safe to be exciting. Part of the reason Formula One is popular is because of the element of danger. It's moved on a huge amount in the last 30 years and that's been very good – but I think it's safe enough now that I can say it's exciting and it's right. It feels right to go racing. We could always make it more safe, we could make the cars go maximum 80km/h and it would be completely safe – but it would be very boring. You can always make it safer but you will make it less exciting and that's my problem with it.

And Stoffel, your thoughts?

Stoffel VANDOOORNE: Yeah, I think aesthetically it's definitely not the nicest thing we've put on the cars and I think a lot of people agree with that – but we've been pushing to improve cockpit safety, to improve head protection. I think the FIA have done a lot of investigations on what would be the best solutions, trying a couple of different solutions with the screen being tested in Silverstone as well. I think for them that was the best solution. So, yeah, I don't think it's a big surprised to see it in 2018 on the cars.

Q: Max, if we can come back to you now. It's been a difficult opening ten races of the year for you; five retirements but Red Bull team principle Christian Horner has said this week that in adversity, you're becoming a better driver. I just wondered if you agreed with him.

MV: It's nice to hear. No I think it's always the target to improve every single year so I think I definitely improved again compared to last year but it's a bit difficult to... or it was difficult to show, of course, when you retire but luckily in Silverstone I had no issues but we still need to be honest to ourselves and now there was an issue on the other car, so we still need to be more reliable I think. We'll start here in Hungary and see how it goes.

Q: And how do you rate your chances this weekend? Red Bull's been on the podium every year for the last four years; is that your expectation?

MV: We have to wait and see how the updates will work but also from the guys ahead, because they are not standing still. So hopefully we will be close but of course in Silverstone we went a little bit in the wrong direction but if you look to the previous races I think we were actually catching up so let's try to continue in that way and hopefully we will find a good balance and then I'm sure if there are some things happening like they always do here I think in Hungary, then we have a good chance.

Q: Sergio, coming back to you: the Hungaroring hasn't been that kind to you during your Formula One career. I just wonder, given the team's form this year, how confident are you of being competitive?

SP: I think yes, we have improved the car in terms of making the car more consistent. We might not have a circuit where we go really well and one that we go really badly. I think we've been in our fight, in the midfield, we've been the most consistent team and that's thanks to the car being consistent pretty much on every track. So I think here we can be in the challenge. I think obviously we will have the McLarens, the Haas, the Renaults, the Toro Rossos - they will be quite strong around here. But I expect ourselves to be in that fight, in that mix and hopefully score very good points on Sunday.

Q: The driver silly season is in full swing and I would just like to ask you about that if I may. Force India has clearly made a step forward this year; are you confident they can make another step next year and do you want to make that step with them?

SP: I think the team has been moving forwards every year, you know? Although last year we achieved the same position which we have now which is fourth, I think we have consolidated that four place. I think the team is moving forwards; there is a lot more interest in terms of sponsorship into the team, more investment but it's not easy to make the next step with the big boys, with the big teams, it's not easy. In terms of my future, I just hope that once I come back to the next race, after the summer break, I can have a new contract.

Q: A new contract with Force India.

SP: That would be good you know, but you never know what will happen.

Q: Kevin, talking of contracts, Gene Haas has confirmed that both yourself and Romain will remain with the team in 2018. How important is that stability both for you personally and for the team?

KM: I think it's important for both. I knew, when I signed the contract, there were two years, so it's not news for me but it's good of Gene to tell everyone and make it... now we will have the questions so hopefully no more of those kind of questions for the rest of the season. It's nice to be in that situation because for the last two seasons I've done in Formula One it's been always frustrating to talk about contracts every races in the last part of the season. Now, it's clear what the plan is so we can focus on racing and just push freely and not worry about anything - just go racing as hard as I can.

Q: And do you work well with Romain?

KM: Yeah, I think so. It's a good relationship and I think the support we have from the team is fantastic. It's a very good environment to be in as a driver. The trust that we get from the team is very big and I think we're both performing well and I can certainly learn from him and I hope he can learn from me as well so we can push each other forward and help the team that way.

Q: Stoffel, so halfway through the season, how do you reflect on progress, both for you personally and for McLaren?

SV: Yeah, for us it's been a difficult start to the season, Not a surprise, I think we've had a lot of technical problems to start which compromises a lot of our running, let's say, but I think since we've made good steps forward. It's still not perfect, we know that, there's still a long way to go but we've definitely improved on the chassis side, engine side as well, so I think everything is going in the right direction. We're still a long way off, that's true but I think the recent races have shown some good progress and yeah, I'm comfortable with the car which is performing very well like this weekend as well for us should be a good opportunity so yeah, I'm looking forward to the remainder of the season to hopefully continue that trend.

Q: You said a moment ago you're still a long way off but equally this weekend should be a good opportunity; what is it about the Hungaroring that lends itself to your car?

SV: It's a very twisty circuit, a lot of corners, we know our chassis is performing well in these corners. It's a bit like Monaco without the walls, let's say and it's also one of the circuits where the power sensitivity is a bit lower. On paper it's a chance for us, this weekend but yeah, it's not a given for sure, so we need to be focused on getting the maximum out of our package and then hopefully we will be rewarded with a good result.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Ysef Harding - Xiro Xone News) We've got a big weekend, summer break coming up. Where are you guys going: Barbados, anybody for California, anybody for Hawaii? What have you guys got planned for the summer break?

KM: Not too much, really. I'm going to relax as much as I can, recharge the batteries. I have no plans so I will see what I do.

SP: For me, no Barbados. I go to California.

MV: Yeah, some friends and family holiday.

Q: Are you going to tell us where?

MV: No.

SV: I know where Maxi is going but... I'm going to Montenegro with a few friends and then the rest of the time I'll just chill out in Monaco.

Q: (Tomasz Kubiak – SwiatWyscigow) Question to the three drivers who took part in last year's race: the track limits were enforced electronically then. Were you in favour of that solution over some of the aggressive kerbs that are damaging the cars on some tracks?

MV: It's not ideal for our car because of the ride height we are running. It's easy to destroy your front wing or the front of the floor so it's not great and I think we can still fine tune it a bit but in one way you have to stay off them. It's not too bad but it's not fantastic yet.

SP: I think it will be very difficult, you know, to have this electronic system where it slows you down and then you can create a massive shunt behind you so I don't think it's the right way to go. These cars go really fast, they're not like indoor karting where if you are crashing around, they can slow you down. The difference in speeds can be really big so I don't think it's the right way forward: going off and manually, electronically reducing your speed.

Q: So you think the kerbs is a good solution.

SP: Yes, I think so.

KM: I think the kerb's fine.

Q: (Jerome Pugmire - AP) Max, Mercedes announced that they're going to go into Formula E. I just want to know what you think of the sport; do you think it's exciting, perhaps not fast enough for somebody like you? What do you think of it?

MV: It can be a bit faster, I think but that will... you know the evolution with the cars for sure, that will be done and I think the rest... yeah, there are some exciting races, absolutely. I try to watch it and I think you also have to get rid of the pit stop where you have to jump in another car but of course that's going to happen, so we will see what happens there.

Q: (Péter Vámosi – Vas Népe) Checo, if you had the opportunity to rename the Force India team, what would it be? And of course is there any real opportunity that it will be Brabham?

SP: Force Mexico or Force Checo. Checo would be good. Couple of ideas for Vijay. I think the team is definitely moving in the right direction. Hopefully, very soon we can find out which name we will have for the future. I don't know anything about Brabham.

Q: (Velimir Veljko Jukic – Auto Fokus) For all drivers: next year, you will have more protection so will you risk more and push even more harder, even harder?

MV: That would mean you're doing a very bad job at the moment so I don't think so.

Q: (Rik Spekenbrink – Algemeen Dagblad) Max, I know it's hard to predict what an upgrade will do but what are you hoping for realistically?

MV: That we can close the gap to the guys ahead. I think that's the obvious target for us at the moment and then we will see what happens.

Q: (Erik van Haren – De Telegraaf) Max, do you think this track is better for you guys and especially as at Silverstone you said you didn't have enough pace there, when you look at Ferrari and Mercedes? Do you think it will be better for you here?

MV: We hope so. In general it should be a little bit better for us, also like Stoffel said, the power sensitivity is not as big. But still, you need a good balance and we have to try and work on that.

Q: (Sura'nyi Géza – Heves Megyei Hirlap) To all drivers: going back to the halo thing, do you think it's disturbing for a driver from the point of view that it's difficult to see from the car when the halo is on and do you think that it will impact your driving?

KM: I think it could have an effect on tracks that are uphill, for example, turn one in Austin or Eau Rouge at Spa, you could struggle to see the top. But I've tried it once but not for very long so... Those laps didn't feel great, it's not a nice sensation to have something right in front of you.

SP: Yeah, I agree with Kevin. I tried it twice, I think, last year, just for a lap so I've done two laps with it, installation laps. I don't really have a lot of information with it. I don't know if we're going to be using the same halo as the one we tried last year, I don't know if it's going to be improved or if anything can be done in that respect.

MV: The one I tried I didn't like the visibility and the thing in front of you so yeah, it's not great. Don't like it.

Q: Stoffel, have you tested the halo?

SV: No, I haven't, I haven't tried it so I think those guys have a better vision of it as they've tried it so I don't know.

Q: (Viktor Bognar – Magyar Szo) To all drivers: just following up on the previous question: are you worried that sticking the halo in front of your eyes will take away some of the excitement of driving a Formula One car?

Q: Stoffel, you haven't tried it, are you nervous about having the halo and will it take some of the excitement away?

SV: It's difficult to say. For sure it will be different. Everything is always different when you put something new on the car and I think like the other drivers said, visually I think it will be a bit strange in the beginning but no one's really done a proper run with it, no one's really done a full day with it and seen how they adapted to different scenarios. I think we will have to wait and see until we actually get to do proper running with it.

MV: I think that as soon as I have that thing on my car I don't like it and I'm not even sitting in the car so the excitement has already gone before I'm even sitting in the car.

SP: As Vandoorne says, we are really far from that. Nobody has really done a day with it so we will see how it goes in Barcelona, the first time we will try it on track.

KM: Yeah, I agree with Max. It takes away some of the passion that Formula One is all about. When you look at the car it's ugly. Formula One cars aren't ugly, they're not meant to be ugly. That's the reason that a Ferrari is more exciting than a Mazda, it's something passionate and if it looks shit, it is shit.

Ends